

## Development of Emotional Sphere of Preschool Children

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### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on creating of a comprehensive program for the development of emotional sphere of preschool children and experimental study of its effectiveness. Leading methods in the study of the discussed problem are observation, interviews, questionnaires, evaluating the experience of pedagogical activity, psychological testing and pedagogical experiment that allow to verify effectiveness of the proposed program. The article discusses the role of preschool educational institutions in the development of emotional sphere of preschool children; it also defines forms and methods for facilitating the expansion of the range of conscious emotions and development of child's emotional well-being (exercises, games, discussions, staging, theatrical story, training, therapeutic activities, etc.); criteria and levels of emotional sphere of children. Effectiveness of the integrated program is examined and proved. The article is of interest to the organization of methodological and empirical provision of this process in a system of preschool education.

### KEYWORDS

emotional sphere, emotions, preschool age, development

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## Introduction

### *Urgency of the problem*

The problem of development of emotions and their role in the motives emergence as means of regulators of behavior control of a child constitutes one of the most important and complex issues of psychology and pedagogy. Any teacher, working with preschool children in daily practice, constantly faces with the problem of emotional sphere development. Educational process in preschool institution should provide emotional comfort, constant psychologically positive climate, humanist attitude, personality-oriented communication. Such conditions will guarantee a cheerful, active, emotional and positive condition of a child, his

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successful adaptation to future school environment. It is therefore necessary to develop the emotional sphere of the child.

The urgency of this development is also justified by the need for modeling of healthy lifestyle of a modern preschool child. In recent years, particular attention is paid to intellectual development but emotional sphere of modern children is characterized by weak will, aggressiveness, lack of emotional generosity.

Transformations that take place in Russia in recent years challenge the system of preschool education. In the foreground there is a personality-oriented model of the teacher-children communication and preservation of mental health of each child (Biktagirova & Khitryuk, 2016). Whereas the development of personality, that is able to perceive and understand its own emotional states and emotional expressions of others, is seen as a condition for its successful adaptation to modern society. It is important to teach a child to talk about his inner world, listen, hear and understand others.

An adult can control his emotions and feelings anyway. To the contrary, a child is unable due to impulsiveness and spontaneity. It is therefore necessary to develop child's sensibility, his emotional generosity, benevolence, empathy (Drozdikova-Zaripova, 2015). Development of emotional sphere conditions health of children and young generation (Biktagirova & Kasimova, 2015; Kostyunina & Valeeva, 2015). Thus, the problem of development of emotions and their role in the motives emergence as means of regulators of behavior control of a child constitutes one of the most important and complex issues of psychology and pedagogy.

### **Literature Review**

Researches on the emotional development of preschool children were conducted by many Russian and foreign scientists and researchers (Vilunas, 1976; Zaporozhets, 1985; Izard, 1980)

Russian researches (Danilina, Zedgenidze & Stepina, 2004; Kosheleva, 2003; Neverovich, 1985; Rybakova & Biktagirova, 2015; Valeeva & Khakimova, 2015 etc.) associate the problems in the emotional sphere of a child with a deficiency of positive emotions.

Despite the study of the problem, there is an objective need for the research of content, forms and methods of emotional sphere development, and validity of methodological support of this process.

Analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature and educational activities in the aspect of the current problem revealed understudied areas of scientific knowledge and practice in this sphere. This has made it possible to state the hypothesis of the research problem as: the process of preschool children emotional sphere development will be effective while implementing a specially designed program that includes a variety of forms and methods (exercises, games, discussions, staging, theatrical story, training, therapeutic activities, etc.) aimed at the development of emotional sphere.

### **Materials and Methods**

Reliability of the study conclusions is provided by interdisciplinary analysis of scientific literature, support of basic provisions and scientific findings of psychologists and educators; use of a complex of appropriate and valid methods according to object, subject, purposes and objectives of research (tests,

questionnaires, pedagogical experiment), data processing methods (quantitative and qualitative analysis), methods of mathematical data processing.

### Research Facilities and Research Stages

Experimental work was organized in of the pre-school educational institutions of Kazan. 84 children of 5-7 years old participated in the experiment. Also 96 parents and 8 preschool teachers were involved in the study.

The study was conducted in three stages:

At the first stage (initial assessment) preliminary experiment was organized with an initial diagnosis and observation over children interrelation in a kindergarten. On this basis, a program for the development of emotional sphere of preschool children was developed.

During the formative experiment the designed program was tested.

At the third and final stage of the experiment the results were analyzed, statistical and mathematical data processing were carried out.

### Evaluation criteria

For the purpose achievement the following methods were used: observation; a questionnaire for parents and testing (the test is aimed at determination of child's emotional well-being in a group of kindergarten, designed for preschool teachers (Smirnova & Kholmogorova, 2005); a method of studying the comprehension of human emotional states shown in a picture (Uruntaeva & Afonkina, 1997); drawing technique "Cactus" (Panfilova, 2001).

The method of observation the children's behavior displayed the following levels of children's emotional sphere development:

High level: desire to enter a dialogue, to interact for a long time; successful participation in group actions; satisfactory performance of leading and passive roles; ability to resolve a conflict, complying or getting own way; acceptance and adequate execution of rules proposed by adults; caring attitude to the world of human feelings and the world of objects; ability to involve oneself into activity; using adequate means of expressing one's inner state.

Average level: lack of initiative to communicate; preference for passive roles only; situational regulation of affective roles; situational regulation of emotional diseases; inability to resolve conflicts; help acceptance and possibility of its providing.

Low level (adverse): inability and unwillingness to act together with adults and peers; lack of initiative to communicate; avoidance of interaction; lack of self-control in actions, behavior and emotions; focus on own actions only; non-acceptance of rules and standards of communication and interaction; absence of "good - bad" concepts or unwillingness to follow them; proneness to conflict, aggressiveness.

### Experiment description

The following results were obtained after observation: high level - 44.1%; average level - 52.9%; low level - 3%.

Subsequently, we determined the level of comprehension of human emotional states using the test of G.A. Uruntaeva & J.A. Afonkina (1997).



**Objective:** this method is designed to determine the level of comprehension of emotional states of other people and their own, the way of expressing emotions: joy, sadness, surprise, fear, anger. A research is conducted in two stages individually with each child.

*The first stage:* a child is invited to look at some scene pictures and photos depicting children and adults, and then he has to answer certain questions.

While results processing, the number of correct answers for this series of pictures is counted, which reveals whether children understand the emotional state of adults and peers; what characteristics they found on, who they understand better – an adult or a peer.

*The second stage:* children are offered cards with symbolic faces graphically depicting basic emotions: joy, sadness, fear, anger, surprise. They are presented one by one with a question: "What is this face like?"

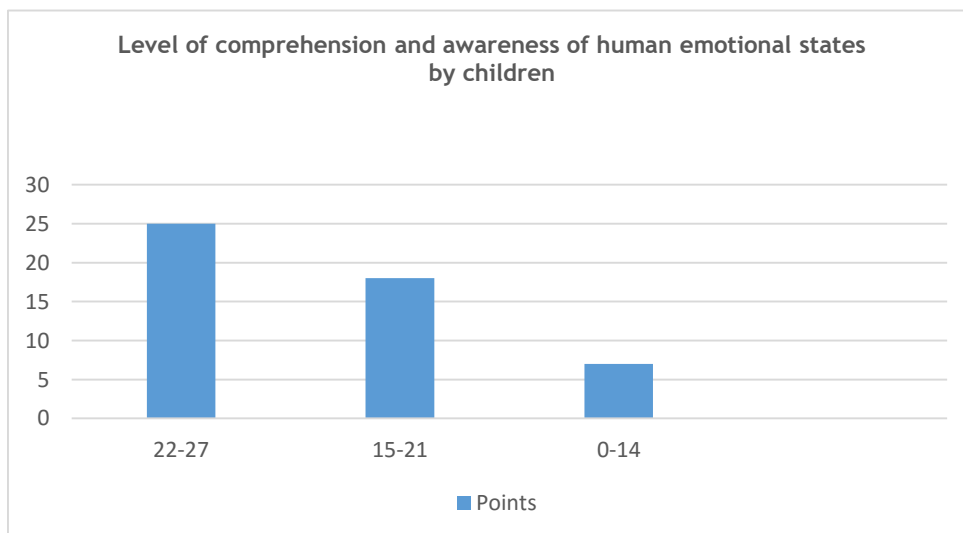
At this stage the perception of graphically depicted emotional states was revealed. These states were compared according to the complexity of perception by children.

When evaluating the results, a three-level scale was used to determine the level of child's comprehension and awareness of emotional states of others and his own:

22-27 points – high level, 15-21 points - average level, 14 points or less - low level.

The following results were obtained on the basis of the scale: high level - 26.5%, average level - 67.7%; low level - 5.8%.

Figure 1 shows that 26.5% of children came up with a high level, this indicates child's full awareness and comprehension of emotional states of adults, peers and his own; 67.7% of children showed an average level, which indicates that these children are not fully aware of the emotional states of other people, as well as their own; and 5.8% showed a low level, this indicates unawareness and lack of comprehension of emotional states of other people by children.



**Figure1.** Distribution of mean values by the method of determining the level of comprehension and awareness of human emotional states by children.

The following drawing technique "Cactus" is aimed at defining aggression. Aggression is one of the characteristics of the emotional distress of children.

The purpose of this technique is determination of child's emotional state, presence of aggressiveness, and its direction and intensity. Processing of the results is carried out on a three-level scale, which shows the presence and degree of aggression:

8-10 points - *low degree of aggressiveness* - no needles on a cactus. An object is large, located in the center of a sheet. Lines are smooth, with moderate pressure, without breaks or discontinuities. Presence of a flowerpot; houseplant image.

4-7 points - *average degree of aggressiveness* - needles of average length located far away from each other. Figure is large, located in the center of the sheet. An object is large, located in the center of a sheet. Lines are smooth, possibly undulating, with moderate pressure.

3 points or less - *high degree of aggressiveness* - salient needles which are long, closely spaced apart. An object is large, goes beyond a sheet. Lines are performed with strong pressure.

The following results were obtained in this study: 35.3% of children came up with high rates which suggest that these children have a low degree of aggressiveness; 52.9% had an average degree of aggressiveness which also corresponds the scope of mental health, and 11.8% of participants showed a high degree of aggressiveness.

Studies have shown that the level of emotional sphere of children is generally relevant to their age. If we consider the results for each child individually, we can see that there are children who need help. For the children with such index, it is desirable to give classes that conduce an increase in the number of recognized emotions and develop emotional well-being, through the modeling of a sense of inner stability and the use of role-playing and outdoor games, elements of psychogymnastics, training activities, games with theatrical elements, etc.

The study provides the basis for further work: determining ways of ensure the emotional well-being of children, where it is advisable to use a specially designed program.

At the stage of formative assessment, a developed program was tested where the following objectives are consistently implemented:

1. To promote the development of volitional self-regulation of psychophysical condition and physical activity of children.
2. To promote the development of volitional self-regulation of emotional state of children.
3. To contribute to the development of children's interest in collaborative plays and activities with peers, development of their social feelings.

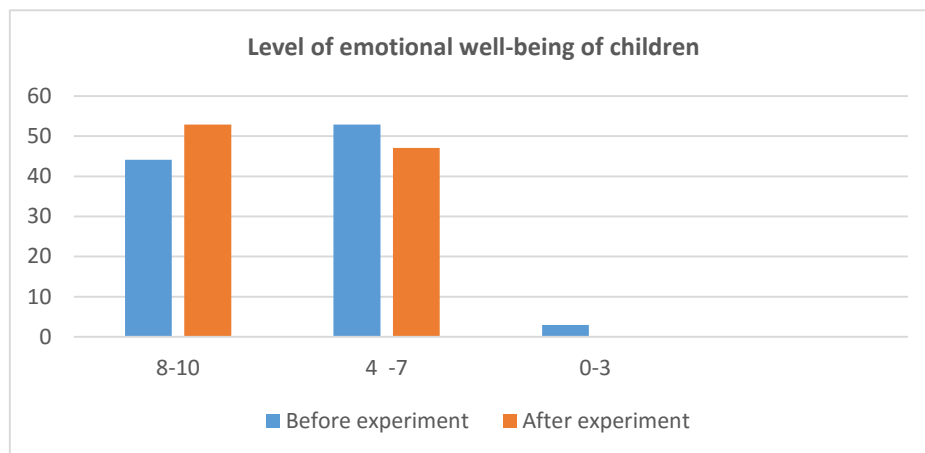
The program is characterized by coherence and integrated nature of problems to be solved on a "simple-to-complex" basis, the diversity of forms and methods of work.

## Results

At the third stage (summative assessment) there were carried out the same operations as at the initial assessment stage, but with the changed numerical series after formative experiment. The results were processed and analyzed.

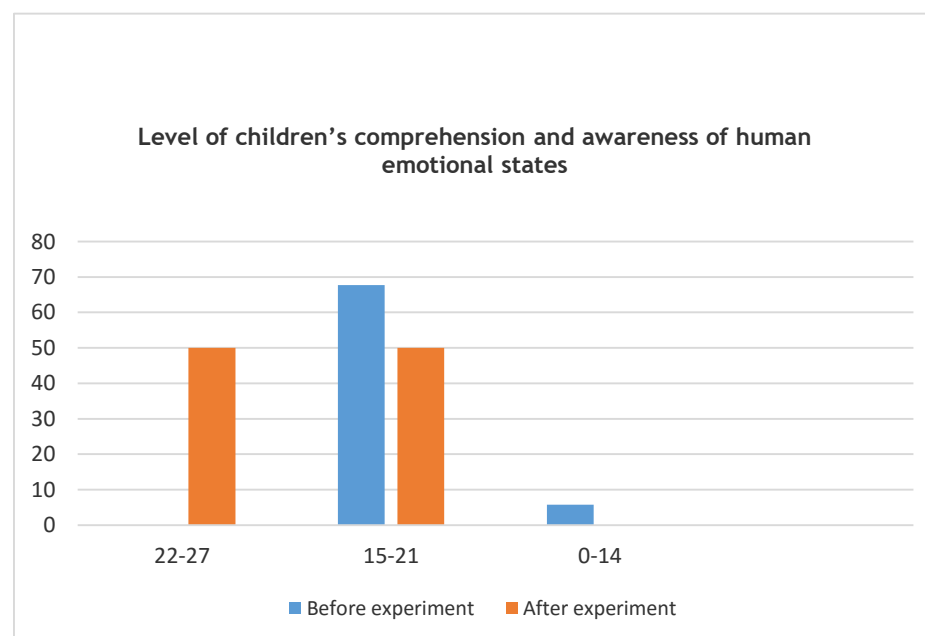


While observing the children (held in a group during the whole day) we obtained the following results, which are presented in a form of a diagram: high level - 52.9%; average level - 47.1%; low level - 0%.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of mean values before and after the experiment by the method of observation.

It is important to note that prior to the experiment received the low level was shown by 3% of children, which indicated an unfavorable climate in the group for these children, but after conducting formative experiment these indicators have changed for the better. When determining the level of children's comprehension and awareness of human emotional states, we obtained the following results: high level - 50%; average level - 50%.

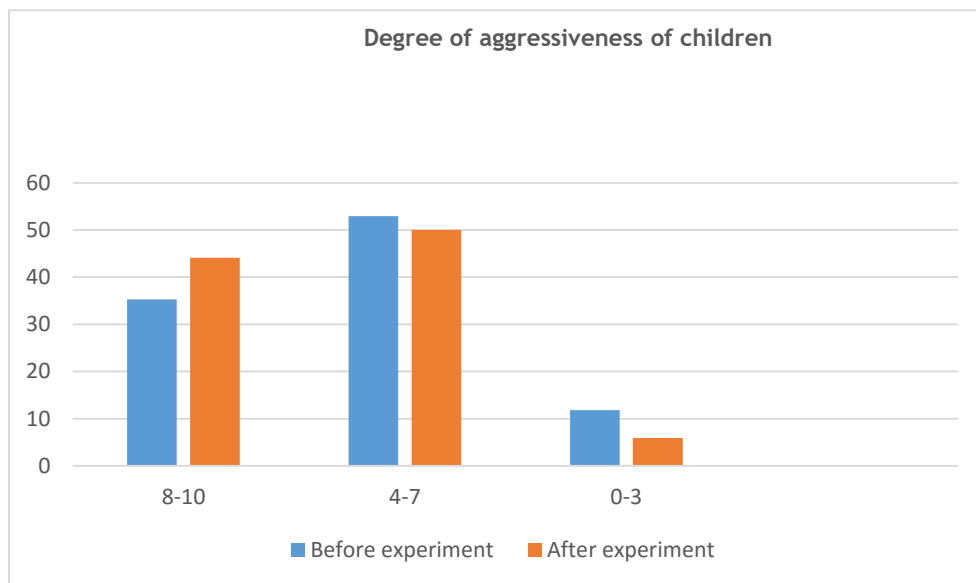


**Figure 3.** Distribution of mean values before and after the experiment by the method of determining the level of comprehension and awareness of human emotional states by children.

From Figure 3 we see that 50% of children showed a high level, indicating the children's full comprehension and awareness of emotional states of adults, peers and their own emotions. The other 50% of the children came out with an average level, which indicates that these children are not fully aware of and understand the emotional state of other people, as well as their own. Nobody showed the low level.

Subsequently, we determined the results obtained by drawing technique "Cactus" (see Figure 4.): high level - 44.1%; average level - 50%; low level - 5.9%.

Figure 4 shows that 44.1% of children came up with rates which suggest that these children have a low degree of aggressiveness; 50% of children showed average degree of aggressiveness indicators, which also corresponds the scope of mental health, and 5.9% received low rates which indicate a high degree of aggressiveness.

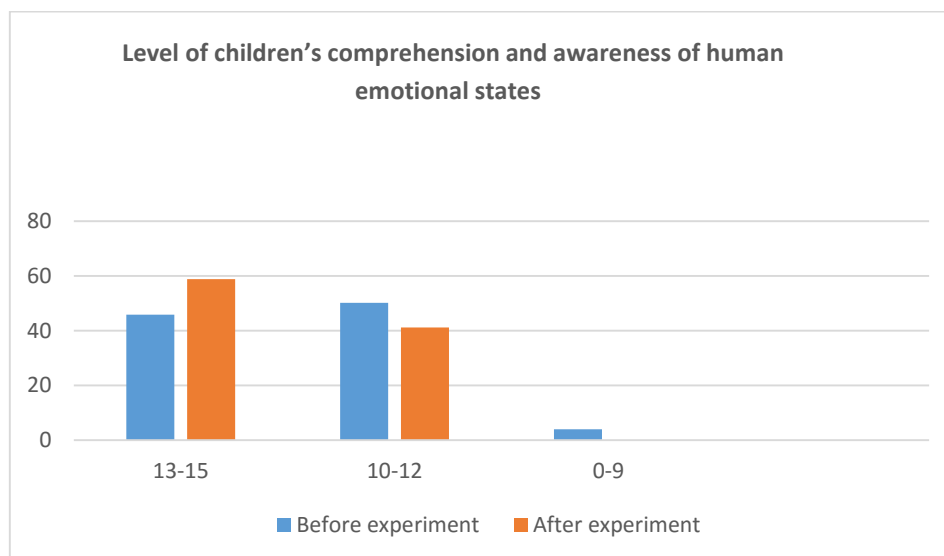


**Figure 4.** Distribution of mean values before and after the experiment by the technique of determining the degree of aggressiveness.

After analyzing the results of the study and comparing the data on the reliability, we see that there is no difference between the mean values before and after the experiment in the results of "observational method" and the technique of determining the degree of aggressiveness. But there exists the difference between the mean values before and after the experiment in the other two methods. From Figures 3 and 4 it can be clearly seen that the results of the children are improved.

To confirm these findings, we referred to the results of testing of preschool teachers and parents. When testing preschool teachers, we examined the emotional well-being of children in the kindergarten group, which is presented in the diagram (Figure 5).

Analysis of the data revealed high level in 58.8% of the children after the experiment, which means that most of the children in the group experience emotional well-being, which is the foundation for the physical and psychological health. 41.2% of children received an average level - they also experience emotional well-being in the group, but there are situations where children are not comfortable enough in the group. Nobody received the low level.



**Figure 5.** Distribution of mean values by the method of determining the emotional well-being of children in the kindergarten group.

After that we analyzed the results with the Student's t-test, which checked whether there is a significant difference in the mean values for the studied parameters at 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stages of the study:

1. After analyzing the results of the study and by comparing the data on the reliability, we see that there is no difference between the mean values before and after the experiment in the results of the technique of determining the degree of aggressiveness. But there exists the difference between the mean values before and after the experiment in the results of other methods.

2. High significant correlation between the indicators in the level of comprehension and awareness of the emotional state was revealed.

## Discussions

After the experimental research the following conclusions were obtained:

1. Results of intinial assessment showed that preschool children show in general an average level of the development of emotional sphere. But there are also children with a very low level. Therefore, it is necessary to give classes, contributing to increase the number of perceived emotions and emotional development of child's well-being.

2. During the formative experiment a program, aimed at development of emotional sphere of preschool children, was carried out and approved.

3. At the summative assessment we measured again the main indicators of emotional sphere of preschool children. The results show positive dynamics.

With the research results shown we can conclude that the tested program is effective. The proposed hypothesis was confirmed.

## Conclusion

Today it is very important to develop the emotional sphere of preschool children. The article discusses the necessity and feasibility of this process, the



presence of this problem in psychological and educational literature. Experimental work was organized in of the pre-school educational institutions of Kazan. The conducted experiment proved validity of the suggested hypothesis and theoretical assumptions on the implementation of the program, which includes a variety of forms and methods (exercises, games, discussions, staging, theatrical story, training, therapeutic activities, etc.) aimed at the development of emotional sphere.

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### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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